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PS Human Resources

PSssst!

Interim HR support might be your most cost-effective HR option

If you think HR support means hiring someone full-time or managing without because that's too expensive, think again.

There's a middle option that a lot of businesses overlook.

Interim HR support has been growing as a solution for businesses that need real expertise for a specific period. Maybe for a restructure, a complex people issue or for getting ahead of Employment Rights Act changes.

The appeal is straightforward. You get senior HR expertise when you actually need it, without the salary, the notice period or the long-term commitment.

For many small businesses, it works out significantly cheaper than either hiring or doing nothing and picking up the cost of getting things wrong later.

The Employment Rights Act is bringing the biggest changes to employment law in a generation. Unfair dismissal rights will apply from six months in service from January 2027. The Fair Work Agency is already operational and actively inspecting records.

Businesses that haven't needed dedicated HR input before are finding that they do now, all of a sudden.

That's the kind of situation where a time-limited, clearly scoped piece of HR support can be genuinely useful. You're not signing up for ongoing retainer costs. You're solving a defined problem with the right expertise, then moving on.

The key is being clear on what you actually need before you bring anyone in. What's the problem? What does success look like? If you can answer those two questions, interim HR is worth a proper look.

We provide interim and project-based HR support for businesses that need expert input without a permanent hire.

Get in touch for a confidential chat about what that could look like for your situation.

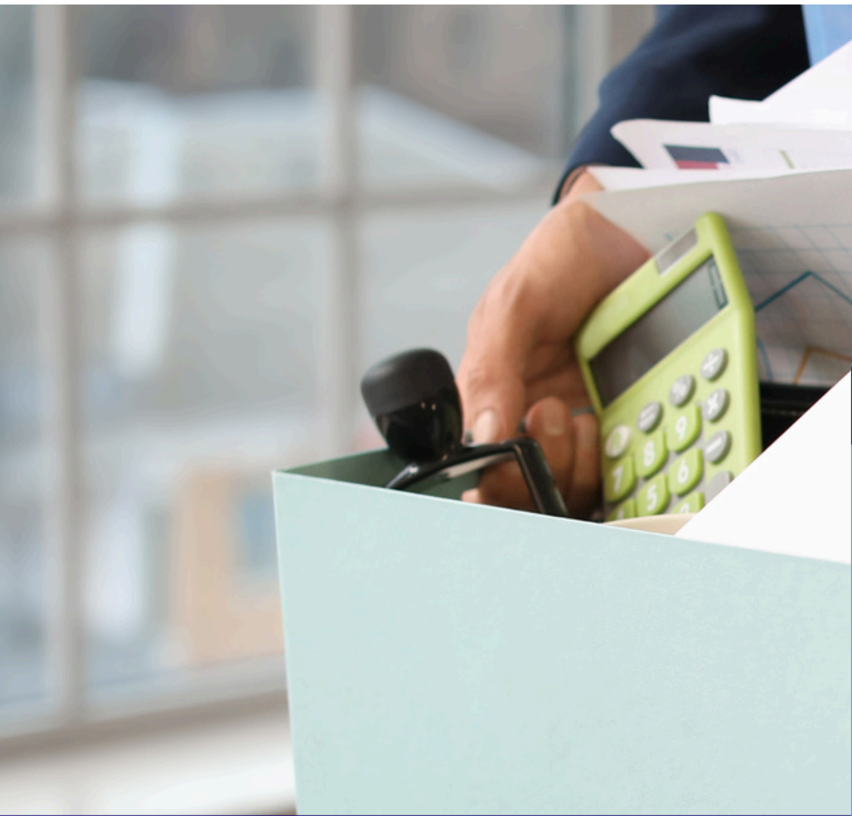
LATEST NEWS

One in seven workers has had their basic employment rights violated

New research by University College London, commissioned by the Fair Work Agency, found that at least 5.6 million workers, around 14% of the workforce, have experienced a clear breach of their basic employment rights in the past two years.

Breaches included failure to pay the National Minimum Wage, missing payslips and no written contract.

The FWA now has a proactive enforcement mandate, which means that it doesn't have to wait for a complaint. If your paperwork isn't in order, that's a risk worth taking seriously.



The cost of getting a dismissal wrong just got higher

You probably already know that dismissing someone can be risky. What's changing is how expensive that risk could become.

From January 2027, the compensation cap for unfair dismissal is going to be removed. At the same time, employees will gain unfair dismissal rights after six months instead of two years, meaning that millions more workers will be covered.

Tribunal claims are on the up too: open caseloads now sit at around 58,000 cases, with some hearings not happening for another few years as there are so many in the queue.

Many claims don't start with some huge HR disaster and are avoidable. Claims often start with things like a rushed conversation, missing notes, inconsistent treatment between staff or a performance issue that was never properly addressed because everyone hoped it would just sort itself out.

The new Fair Work Agency is also expected to increase scrutiny around record-keeping and employment practices, which means messy processes could create even more headaches for employers down the line.

If you're thinking about dismissing an employee and feel uncertain about how watertight your processes are, seek help from a professional today.

We help small business owners to review dismissal decisions, documentation and process risks before problems escalate.

LATEST NEWS

The hidden tax bill that comes with creative perks

Pet-friendly offices, dog-care allowances and other unusual benefits are increasingly popular with small businesses looking to attract and retain staff.

HMRC treats most non-cash perks as benefits in kind and that includes pet-related ones.

If you're offering anything beyond standard salary, you'll need to value it correctly and report it via P11D.

A perk that costs you nothing in cash can still create a tax liability if it isn't handled properly. Worth a quick check before you commit to anything new.

The Fair Work Agency is here and small businesses are in scope

The Fair Work Agency launched on 7 April 2026, replacing several separate enforcement bodies with one.

A single investigation can now look at National Minimum Wage compliance, holiday pay, statutory sick pay and agency worker regulations all at once.

The six-year lookback window is the detail most businesses aren't aware of. An action in 2026 can reach back to payroll periods from 2020.

In March 2026, 389 employers were named for NMW breaches totalling £7.3 million in arrears. Most were caught on technical errors, not deliberate underpayment. Holiday pay miscalculations, particularly around overtime and commission, are another common issue.

And, from April 2026, employers without adequate SSP records will struggle to evidence compliance if they're investigated.

Penalties can be steep. SSP underpayment, for example, can result in a penalty of up to 200% of what was owed, on top of repaying the arrears.

If you're not sure that your records would hold up to scrutiny, now is a good time to find out.

Your top HR questions

Can I withdraw a job offer if the successful candidate fails a background check?

Yes, in most cases. If you've made the offer conditional on satisfactory checks and the candidate doesn't pass, you can withdraw it.

Where it gets more complicated is if the check reveals something that relates to a protected characteristic, such as a health condition or a spent conviction in certain roles.

Make sure that your offer letters are clear about what conditions apply and take advice before withdrawing if anything sensitive comes up.

What benefits do I have to declare to HMRC and how?

Most non-cash benefits provided to employees need to be reported to HMRC as benefits in kind. This includes things like company cars, private medical insurance, gym memberships and certain expense payments.

You report them annually using a P11D form for each employee who received a benefit or through payroll if you've registered to do it that way.

Some benefits are exempt, so do check before you assume something doesn't need to be declared.

Do I need to have a breastfeeding policy and what should it include?

There's no legal requirement to have a standalone written policy, but you do have legal obligations around supporting breastfeeding employees

You need to provide a suitable, private space for expressing milk (which can't be a toilet) and carry out a health and safety risk assessment for the employee if asked.

A short, clear policy is a sensible way to set expectations and show that you've thought about it. It should cover where employees can express milk, how breaks will be handled and who to speak to if they need support.

Let's talk on the phone

Here are three questions for you:

- Do you currently have a HR consultant?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how happy are you with them?
- If the answer isn't "I'm so delighted I could print 1,000 flyers to spread the word about them", let's jump on a video call

You know just how important it is to get proactive, responsive HR support. That's what we do. And we're taking on new clients.

Set up a 15 minute exploratory call at www.pshumanresources.co.uk

YOUR HR EXPERT: EMMA SHEPPARD